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The opening ceremony of the International Steam Azerbaijan Festival 2022 was held on 5 December at Baku Expo Centre with the support of the Ministry of Science and Education.

The opening ceremony was attended by Deputy Prime Minister Ali Ahmadov, Minister of Science and Education Emin Amrullayev, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the State Examination Center Maleyka Abbaszadeh, officials from other government agencies, members of the National Assembly, heads of media structures, well-known members of the public and other guests.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Minister of Science and Education Emin Amrullayev welcomed the guests and noted that the festival is a prestigious and significant event in the field of education. Speaking about the Steam Project, the minister noted that the project is the first step toward further education in Azerbaijan. Emin Amrullayev noted that the main purpose of Steam education is to prepare the next generation for new challenges.

In his speech, the Minister of Science and Education, emphasizing the support of more than 250 "BIBIR" ("ONE") student volunteers in the organization of the festival, congratulated each of them on December 5 - International Volunteer Day.

At the end of his speech, the minister thanked everyone who contributed to the organization of the festival and wished the participants success.

In his speech at the festival, the head of the project "Steam Azerbaijan," Igrar Nazarov, spoke in detail about the project and the festival. Igrar Nazarov said that now the Steam project covers 318 schools and 100,305 students all over the country, and 22 Steam centers are functioning. He noted that by 2026, the number of students in the project is planned to reach 280 thousand.

Noting the difference between SAF 2022 and SAF 2021, Igrar Nazarov said that 1,312 people in 350 teams participated in this year's festival, of which 127 teams represented 7 foreign countries.

It was noted that SAF 2022 will be held in 10 categories, such as "VEX IQ" and "VEX V5", "Robotics," "Lego," "Search and Rescue" (10-14, 15-18 years old), "Hackathon" (High school), "Hackathon"

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(general education schools), "Dream World" (elementary school), "Robokids" (elementary school), "Mechatronics," and "Learning Drones."

Based on applications from the UK, Sweden, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Estonia, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan, teams from these countries were secured to participate in the festival in various categories. Specialists from France, Israel, Norway, China, and Turkey were invited as judges to evaluate the team's performance in the competition. An exhibition of "Innovative projects" was also organized at SAF 2022.

It should be noted that the festival will last until December 9.

The purpose of the festival is to support STEAM-based education, nurture 21st century skills among students, identify and network creative, digitally savvy students, and research international experience in innovation and digitalization.